

Biblical Parenting – Session 2

The Responsibilities of Parents: Discipline

Review:

- How was your perspective on parenting different this past week?
- We saw last session that if we are to rightly understand the family, and rightly live in a family, we must understand and embrace that greater design of God!
- For family and parenting is but one small piece of God's design
 - God is doing something far greater in the world than building families!
 - God is redeeming a people by His Son, for His Son
 - And He is doing it all for His glory!
 - Family is but one means to that end...and a very important and central one...but
 - The family is not an end in itself
 - If we make family our goal, we are missing it entirely
 - The goal is the glory of God
 - The goal is the spread of the kingdom of Christ
 - If you simply go in this class from living for yourself (or your job or your hobby) to living for your kids...you have simply exchanged idols
 - Anything other than a life spent living for Christ, hoping in Christ, treasuring Christ and proclaiming Christ is idolatry
 - So our vision and desire for our families must go beyond family
 - Our vision for parenting must be about more than ourselves and our kids
 - It must be the glory of God in Christ
- Which means that must be the greatest passion and pursuit of our life
 - more than our own desires for comfort, success, prestige, financial security, etc.
 - more than our desire to be respected by our children
 - etc.

-So we saw last time, that a faithful, biblical parent will be

 - a Christ-centered parent
 - our life and our family must revolve around Christ
 - not us
 - not our kids
- If that is true of us, then our greatest desire for our kids must be that they share in that same passion and pursuit of Christ
- And we will be eager to be instruments to that end

So, what do we do as parents to be instruments in bringing about that reality in the hearts of our kids...

-Look at Ephesians 6:4

-two primary responsibilities or tools in our toolbox – Eph 6:4

-bring them up (nourish them...in 5:29) in the

1. Discipline or Training (used in Hebrews 12)
2. Instruction (Admonition)

-of the Lord

-again, the Christ-centeredness of our parenting!

-it is about Christ

-it is for Christ

Ephesians 6:4

-The two nouns are similar

-the first likely refers more to training – “structured guidance and restraint” – Stuart Scott
The Faithful parent

Heb 12:5⁵ *and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;*

Heb 12:7⁷ *It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?*

Heb 12:8⁸ *But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.*

Heb 12:11¹¹ *All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*

2 Ti 3:16¹⁶ *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*

-the second more to verbal instruction and warning

1 Co 10:11¹¹ *Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*

Tt 3:10¹⁰ *Reject a factious man after a first and second warning.*

-Verbal instruction is kind of fun...we get to hear ourselves talk

-Discipline is hard

-Both are vital

Today and next week, we are going to focus on discipline...now when the bible speaks of discipline, it does so in several different senses...

1) Corrective Discipline – use words like discipline, chastise, chasten, reproof, correction
-This is discipline that is in response to sin

2) Formative Training – use words like discipline, train, instruct
-This is preemptive training

*Think of a football practice – players run...why? Because they need to get in shape...and because they make mistakes – both are discipline or training – as parents, we need to do both...

They can look very similar...i.e.

-Have your child clean the bathroom...

-Might be a regular routine expectation of them intended to teach them...

- How to work hard
- How to serve others
- How to do gross things
- How to care for ones home

-Might be a consequence for sin in their life...failure to obey their mother all afternoon and so when dad gets home from work, they get to clean the bathroom. Intended to teach them

- That sin has consequences
- And all the other things...
- How to work hard
- How to serve others
- How to do gross things

Five Realities that should shape our discipline or training – both that which is corrective in response to sin and formative, preemptively training for the future

I. Your discipline must be shaped by the nature of your children

- They are made in the image of God
 - Genesis 1:27
 - Why all people are to be treated with honor and dignity
 - Discipline is not to be done to humiliate them or harm them
- They will exist for all of eternity either in heaven or hell
 - More is at stake than simply this life
 - Gives us motivation

Those alone still do not explain the need for discipline...

- They are sinners
 - What do most parents in the US believe about the moral nature of their children?
 - Most parents think of their children as basically good or at least as morally neutral
 - How does that affect parenting?
 - The implication is if we simply cultivate that and don't mess them up, they will be fine
 - Now it is true that all children are born with a moral compass...they do know right and wrong...because God has given each of us a conscience but we do not by nature follow that compass...rather we by nature rebel against that compass

- Proverbs 22:15

¹⁵Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him. *(NASB95)*

- Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child!
- way of sin
- disposition and pattern of rebellion against God

"Remember children are born with a decided bias toward evil, and therefore if you let them choose for themselves, they are certain to choose wrong. The mother cannot tell what her tender infant may grow up to be – tall or short, weak or strong, wise or foolish; he may or may not be any of these – it is all uncertain. But one thing the mother can say with certainty: he will have a corrupt and sinful heart. It is natural for us to do wrong... Our hearts are like the earth on which we tread; let it alone, and it is sure to bear weeds."

– J.C. Ryle

- Left to their own desires – they will continue to grow in their rebellion against God and they will spend eternity in hell
- It is not an option to do nothing!

-If your kids were basically good or even morally neutral, you could simply positively reward good behavior... (like many modern dog training philosophies...don't whack them on the head)...just reward good behavior...

Your kids need discipline!

- Proverbs 23:13-14

¹³Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die.

¹⁴You shall strike him with the rod And rescue his soul from Sheol. *(NASB95)*

Discipline is a rescue mission designed to save your kids from Hell!

-Your discipline must be focused on more than behavioral change!

-If must be with the desire that God would change their heart!

-balance of God's sovereignty and our responsibility

-we must use the means that God has given us to accomplish that end

-primarily through the use of the rod – physical discipline

Understanding the nature of our kids helps us recognize the importance of parental discipline!

"A gardener may sow the choicest seeds; but if he neglects to pluck up weeds, and prune wild overgrowth, he must not expect to see his flowers grow, or his garden flourish. And so a parent may deliver the best instructions; but if he does not, by discipline, eradicate evil tempers, correct bad habits, repress wicked corruptions, nothing excellent can be looked for."

– John Angell James, *The Christian Father's Present to His Children*

II. Your discipline must be shaped by God's discipline of His children – that of a loving, authoritative Father

- *Deuteronomy 8 – Picture of God's Discipline*

- *Hebrews 12:4-11 – Principles of God's Discipline*

- What is God's relationship with His children?
 - Loving Father
 - He has loved Israel – redeemed them from slavery
 - He has loved us – redeemed us from sin
 - Authority
 - So many parents today simply want to be their child's friend or advisory
 - God says you are their authority – Eph 6:1
- Who is disciplined by God
 - God disciplines every one of His children, whom He loves (Heb. 12:6-8)
 - those who are His Sons
 - those whom He loves (to one of God's children is to be loved by God)
 - there is more to being a son than simply being disciplined
 - God's discipline takes place in the context of a broader loving relationship with the Father
 - discipline must be exercised in the context of a loving, family relationship
 - it is an expression of belonging to a family!
 - if you are not disciplined you are being treated like an orphan
 - there are many other expressions of belonging to a family that need to be present as well for our discipline to be rightly understood:
 - they are loved/delighted in
 - they are protected
 - they are cared for – needs are met
- Why does God discipline His Sons?
 - For their good and maturity as preparation for the future
 - for their good (Heb 12:11)
 - to bring them to maturity
 - to share in a future inheritance
 - like my uncle Jamie training his sons to take over his car dealerships
 - so much of being a Christian is about living for the future
 - save your life now, lose it in eternity
 - either store up treasure now, or in heaven (eternity)
- What are the specific goals of God's discipline?
 - That they will obey Him (authority)
 - so we will be subject to or respect God – live under authority
 - I am not my own master
 - I do not always know what is best for me

-I don't always get what I want (and that's not bad) or at least what I want now

"Our motive for discipline is to bring our children into a subordinate relationship to the authority of the living God and not just to ourselves. If we seek to make our children submit to us alone, we have failed in our biblical responsibility. Rather, God says that we are to bring them into submission *to Him*. All of our discipline, nurture, instruction, and warning must be framed in this context: To bring them to the point where they become obedient disciples of Jesus Christ."

-Bruce Ray, *Withhold Not Correction*, p. 48

- That they will be like Him (holiness)
 - so we will be holy
 - to not be mastered by our appetites
 - I don't have to have what I want
 - I may not be able to have what I want now and still have what is best in the future
 - to share in God's affections
 - to love what God loves
 - to hate what God hates
 - Nathan and David
 - so we will enjoy the peaceful fruit of righteousness
 - What are the means of God's discipline
 - teaching and instruction
 - rules and accompanying consequences and rewards
 - circumstances that shape, develop, and test character
 - provision and withholding
 - How does God discipline
 - patiently – not trying to change everything at once
 - consistently -
 - intentionally
- God is not:
- passive in His discipline
 - hyper-scrupulous/harsh

How does our relationship with our children reflect God's relationship with His children?

What are you preparing your children for?

What are your specific goals for your children in light of this?

How can you train/discipline them toward that end?

III. Your discipline must be shaped by the warnings and exhortations of Scripture

1. Do not neglect discipline when your children are young

Prov 19:18 ^aDiscipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire ¹his death. (Pro 19:18 NAU)

- *Proverbs 22:6*

- Clearly an admonition to train children
- Clearly an admonition to faithfully train them when they are young
- 3 interpretations
- Be sure to train up a child in spiritual things early, because then he will eventually come back to it
- Train up a child according to their unique personality, bents, etc.
- Warning: Train a child according to his own way (allow them to have unlimited self-expression, etc.) when he is old, he will not depart from it
- This verse is not a promise

2. Do not discipline in a way that provokes your children to anger

- *Ephesians 6:4 (Colossians 3:21)*

- one commentator (Andrew Lincoln, WBC, 406)
 - excessive or unreasonable expectations or discipline
 - harshness
 - abuse of our authority – selfishly disciplining
 - arbitrariness/lack of consistency
 - unfairness/lack of equity or justice
 - constant nagging or condemnation
 - humiliating a child
 - etc.

- Chapter 8 “Parents who Provoke” in *The Faithful Parent* by Stuart Scott and Martha Peace or *The Heart of Anger* by Lou Priolo

Targeted end of Part 1

3. Recognize that “the rod” is the primary means God has given you to discipline your children (especially when they are young)

- primary, not only
- we saw that there is more to discipline than this, but this is a key part of it
- we saw that God uses a variety of means of discipline/training

-Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. *(NASB95)*

-Proverbs 13:24 ⁴ Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent [seeks them early] to discipline him. (Pro 13:24 ESV)

Proverbs 10:13 ¹³On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found, But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding. *(NASB95)*

Proverbs 26:3 ³A whip is for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, And a rod for the back of fools. (NASB95)

Proverbs 23:13-14 ¹³Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod (clearly physical discipline), he will not die. ¹⁴You shall strike him with the rod And rescue his soul from Sheol. (NASB95)

Proverbs 22:15 ¹⁵Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him. (NASB95)

"The rod is a parent, in faith toward God and faithfulness toward his or her children, undertaking the responsibility of careful, timely, measured, and controlled use of physical punishment to underscore the importance of obeying God, thus rescuing the child from continuing in his foolishness until death."

-Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, p. 104

Why don't people use the Rod of Discipline?

- I love them too much
 - God disciplines every son whom He loves
- It doesn't work
 - Sometimes they are right – need to change how you spank
 - Not consistent
 - Not persistent
 - Not effective
 - Sometimes they are right – need to continue long term
 - Sometimes they are right
- Teach them to hit
- Just never the right time...we're at church...he's tired...

Why this as opposed to other forms of discipline?

- There is a sense in which we spank in faith, because God tells us to
 - we don't have to understand why to obey
- But there is a very real sense in which spanking provides some very clear benefits as opposed to other methods of discipline, at least in my mind
- If you do not spank, what are some other forms of discipline you might use?
 - Time out
 - Withholding privileges/possessions
- Most of these have several practical issues...
 1. They drag out the time of discipline
 - can lead to bitterness (grounded for two weeks)
 - difficult to be restored to right relationship while the discipline is still in effect
 2. They require obedience to fulfill the discipline
 - Go to your room....no
 - Sit in this chair for 10 minutes...5 minutes later they walk by...now what....sit their for 20...already showed they wouldn't do 10

3. Some kids don't care – sit on your bed – great...happy to daydream, etc.

Spanking is beautiful!

1. It is quick
2. There is clear resolution and reconciliation
3. It is painful for ALL children

Does that mean I can never use other forms of discipline/consequences?

- No – God uses variety, you can too
- Particularly as your kids age
- Or when you have particularly rebellious children
 - you may need to get creative...
 - i.e. teenager who constantly slamming the door and hiding out in their room...remove the door
- But, think it through before you threaten
 - what are the implications for our relationship going to be?
 - what are the other options?
 - is there someone I should run this by to see what they think?

When should I use the rod?

- When your child did not obey
 - Tedd Tripp – without challenge, without excuse, without delay**
- Don't get in the habit of...
 - Raising your voice
 - Repeating yourself – Abby, if I have to tell you again
 - Manipulating your child – Ashlyn, I'm going to count to three, and if you don't come here...
- Not to say that you cannot help and train your younger children to obey...
 - We do remind them and ask them about their obedience
 - Aubrey, are you choosing to obey right away?
 - Ashlyn, what will happen if you do not choose to obey?

When should I not use the rod of discipline?

- when we are angry or frustrated – even when it would otherwise be appropriate
- for instances of childishness
- for accidents
 - if your child thinks the worse thing they can do is spill their milk, something is wrong
 - accidents or childishness often upset us or inconvenience us more than their sin, so we can easily react more strongly to them than we do to sin! This is wrong!
- for inability or lack of understanding

-Ashlyn – go make up your bed

How should I use the rod?

A Suggested Model of a Wise, Gospel-Centered Spanking

1. Pick an instrument – want something that stings real bad without bruising
 - plastic paddle
 - belt works ok
 - fish tank tubing
 - probably best not to use your hand – some feel very strongly about that
2. Pick a location – needs to be private, perhaps bathroom, etc.
 - not for public humiliation
 - it is a private act between parent and child
3. Point out the clear issue of disobedience and consequences
 - “Do you know why you are in here?”
 - “Because I disobeyed/lied/did not honor/etc.”
 - Tell them how many spankings – 1, 2, or 3
 - Wait for them to receive the spanking as a demonstration of their obedience and contrition – “i.e. assume the position”
 - Proverbs 15:5** ⁵A fool rejects his father’s discipline, But he who regards reproof is sensible. (NASB95)
 - Proverbs 15:10** ¹⁰Grievous punishment is for him who forsakes the way; He who hates reproof will die. (NASB95)
4. Administer the discipline
 - On the bottom or the fat back part of the leg (on toddler with a diaper)
 - If you are using the right instrument, you will likely not need to spank on bare skin
 - Your goal is to inflict pain, not injury
 - Proverbs 20:30** ³⁰Stripes that wound scour away evil, And strokes reach the innermost parts. (NASB95)
 - The child will cry
 - Hold them until they are done crying
5. Converse with them – use Scripture whenever possible (will talk more about this in the coming weeks – very helpful to have memorized Scripture!!!
 - “Daddy, I’m sorry, please forgive me”
 - “Yes” and hug
 - Do you know why you did that...because your heart is sinful and is inclined to rebel against God and against me. That is why you need Christ. And that is the same reason why Daddy needs Christ. And because Christ has forgiven me...I am happy to forgive you.
6. Pray with them
7. Have them go make it right if they have sinned against someone else or go respond in the manner they would not before when possible
8. Be reconciled in your relationship

Doesn't always have to be this lengthy every time, but should be regularly characterized by this tone and conversation.

What about when my kids are getting older??

What other forms of discipline? God uses great variety and so will wise parents!

How did God discipline his people?

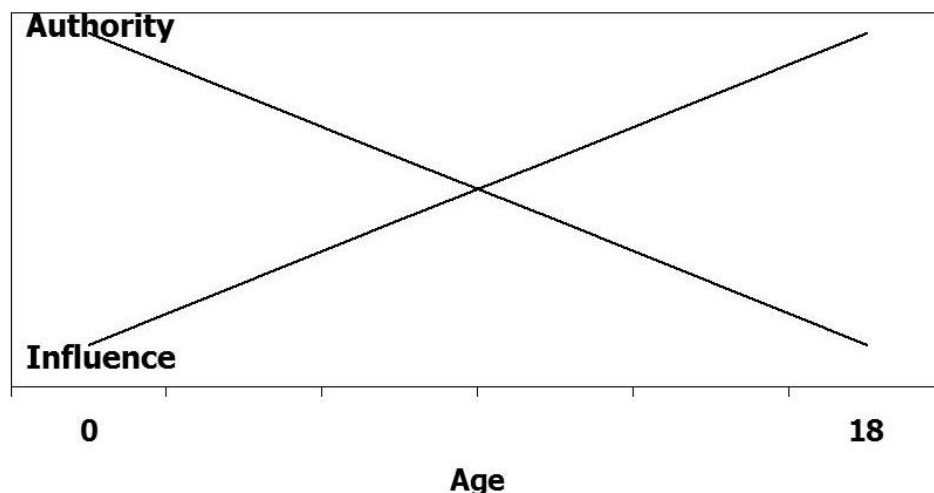
- Wilderness wandering
- Captivity
- Drought
- Famine
- Sometimes by giving them what they wanted – i.e. meat in the wilderness

Heb 12:5⁵ *and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;*

Heb 12:11¹¹ *All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*

IV. Your discipline must be shaped by the age and condition of your child

- Parental Discipline → Self-Discipline
 - move from making decisions to giving choices
 - be careful with giving choices to early
 - be careful that you do eventually give choices/responsibility
 - etc.
- Authority vs. Influence (from *Shepherding a Child's Heart*)



- Discipline at different life stages

- Infants
 - say “no”
 - flick on the hand when you say no
 - light spank when they arch back, etc.
- Toddlers
 - trained to obey the first time
 - helpful to practice obedience with them
 - “help” them obey as they are learning different instructions
 - should begin spanking in a more formal sense – only for clear, direct disobedience

“Often the parent must sacrifice time, energy, and personal desires to obey the Lord and discipline the little one ‘while there is hope’.” *The Faithful Parent*, p. 57

- What about tantrums?
 - is it just a communication problem? Do they just need to know you hear and understand them?
 - should you just let them “cry it out”
 - go quickly, calmly tell them to stop, then spank them

⁴ Don't answer fools according to their stupidity;
otherwise, you will become like them yourself.

⁵ Answer fools according to their stupidity;
otherwise, they will become wise in their own eyes.

26:4–5. The Talmud notes what appears to be a contradiction here, and these verses provided evidence for an essential problem that casts doubt on the canonical authority of the book of Proverbs.² The question may be pointedly put: Does Proverbs advise that the sage should answer the fool or not?

This proverb pair is prime evidence leading toward the proper understanding of the proverb genre. Proverbs are not universally true laws but circumstantially relevant principles (see “Genre” in the introduction). In short, the answer depends on the nature of the fool with whom one is engaged in conversation. In other words, the wise person must assess whether this is a fool who will simply drain one’s energy with no positive results or whether an answer will prove fruitful to the fool or perhaps to those who overhear. The wise not only know the proverb but also can read the circumstances and the people with whom they dialogue.

² So Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon in the New Testament Church*, 284. However, according to Hoglund (“Fool and the Wise in Dialogue,” 162), the Babylonian Talmud tractate *šabbat* states that “in cases dealing with Torah, one should correct the fool’s error, but in most other cases it is better not to answer the fool.” Hoglund’s article argues for the view that these two verses “give a condensed expression to a profound ambivalence.” In my opinion, as argued in the commentary, the “truth” of the proverb depends on the situation. Hoglund rejects this idea, but his rejection flies in the face of what a proverb is. Longman, T., III. (2006). [*Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Proverbs*](#) (p. 464). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

-be careful spanking in public

- Older Preschool and Elementary Children
 - continue to expect first time obedience
 - training in appropriate responses, attitudes (tone of voice, etc.)
 - really focus on addressing the heart and using Scripture

- Teenagers
 - discipline will often become the consequences of their poor/sinful decisions
 - while it is ok to be gracious and helpful...do not insulate your children from consequences.

V. Your discipline must be shaped by the Gospel

- Discipline is vital to your children understanding the gospel
 - Gives an understanding of authority
 - Gives an understanding of sin and its consequences
 - Gives ideal context for talking with your children about the gospel

"The central focus of childrearing is to bring children to a sober assessment of themselves as sinners... The focal point of your discipline and correction must be your children seeing their utter inability to do the things that God requires unless they know the help and strength of God... Discipline leads to the cross of Christ where sinful people are forgiven."

-Tedd Tripp *Shepherding a Child's Heart*

- Discipline is vital to your children experiencing the gospel
 - Discipline is an opportunity for them to experience grace
 - Grace does not deny that sin matters and must be dealt with
 - And grace also says that you are loved and accepted in spite of your sin
 - But grace also isn't content to leave you in your sin

"Grace doesn't mean no discipline. Instead, it changes the *way* we discipline. We combine discipline with love and acceptance. We discipline our children and point to the forgiveness won at the cross..." *Gospel-Centered Family*, p. 47

- Discipline is vital to your children embracing the gospel
 - If you child has a foolish heart, they will not embrace the gospel
 - If your child will not submit themselves to authority, they will not embrace the gospel

What if you haven't done this:

1. *Repent and ask God's forgiveness*
2. *Ask for your kids forgiveness*
3. *Explain to your kids what they can expect and why*
4. *Consistently do it – expecting it to be very hard at first!*

Questions for Reflection

1. Read back through Hebrews 12 and Deuteronomy 8. Are there any aspects of God's discipline that were surprising to you? How should His example shape your discipline as a parent?
2. What should your goals be in disciplining your children? How are these different than what has been true for you in the past?
3. How are you prone to provoke your children to anger? What practical steps can you take to change?
4. Is "the rod" a primary means of your discipline? If not, why hasn't it been? What are appropriate means of discipline for your children at their current ages?
5. Why is it so important for your children to learn to obey your authority?
6. By God's grace, what will you strive to change about how you discipline your kids this next week? What steps will you take to implement these changes?